1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
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PREFACE

THE term Bella Coola can be applied to the Indians who formerly occupied more than twenty villages on the lower Bella Coola River in central British Columbia, to their near kinsfolk on the Kimsquit River, and to those living at the head of South Bentinck Arm. Disease and changed conditions consequent upon the coming of the white man have so reduced their numbers that the last two groups of settlements have been virtually abandoned, while only one village remains in the Bella Coola valley. This is located on a reserve near the mouth of the river, and its four hundred inhabitants comprise practically all the survivors of what was once a tribe of several thousand people, with a distinctive language and culture of their own.

The material contained in this monograph was collected in this one village many years ago for the National Museum of Canada.[1] I was in the field during two periods that extended from March to August, 1922, and from September, 1923, to February, 1924. My field notes were worked up and the completed manuscript submitted to the Museum in 1926. Since that time it has suffered various vicissitudes. Recommended for publication by the Chief of the Anthropological Division, it passed through the hands of various editors; questions were raised about its size and the suitability of detailed studies of social anthropology in a government publication, and by the time these matters were adjusted, funds for extensive publications were unavailable and the manuscript was put aside. Since the aim of the investigation was to record, as far as possible, the sum-total of the complex and interwoven social life of the Bella Coola, I did not think it desirable to prepare short articles[2] summarizing different aspects, preferring to await an

[1] Then the Victoria Memorial Museum.

[2] The only exception was a short article on Bella Coola supernatural animals published in the Ontario Annual Archaeological Report for 1924-25, pp. 17-27.

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kenzie, making his memorable overland trip to the Pacific, records coming upon Indian villages at every few miles of his course. Boas describes the way in which the inhabitants of each of these claim to be descended from one group of ancestors.

Though it is impossible to estimate the former population of the Bella Coola valley with any degree of accuracy, it must have been in the thousands. In 1922 there were surviving rather more than three hundred individuals, who live in one village on an Indian reserve near the north bank of the Bella Coola River, about a quarter of a mile from the sea. In the last century the tribe was stricken with smallpox, and since then consumption, venereal disease, measles, and other diseases of the white man have taken their deadly toll. Changed conditions of life and decay of the rich ceremonial around which centred their interests in the old days are also contributory factors in their decline. Within the last few years, however, the population has begun to increase.

Bella Coola Villages

The following list of Bella Coola villages was obtained. In an effort to learn which had been deserted in recent years, the writer always asked whether or not a town was occupied at the time of Mackenzie's visit, an event of such great interest to the grandparents of the older people that the memory of it is still preserved. Villages said to have been occupied at that time are marked with an asterisk.

Three rivers empty into the head of South Bentinck Arm, which is about one mile in width (see Plate 7). The Bella Coola, flowing from the east, enters at the southern edge, and the *Nulɣɣtskwan·ɛ* winds in from the north to the opposite angle of the head of the fiord. This stream, "The Nearest River" of the Bella Coola, so-called because of its proximity to the sea, is shown on maps as the Necleetsconnay. Between the mouths of these two is the *Pɛɔslh*, a small stream rising

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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seldom a chief who had given many potlatches. Successful raiders rarely slew such an one; his position placed him above the dangers to which lesser men were subject.

Raids appear never to have been carried out solely for the purpose of giving warriors opportunities to display their prowess, or of permitting young men to prove their mettle. Scarcity of food was the commonest cause for forays when, of course, the victims were chosen for their accumulated supplies. The Kwakiutl especially, lacking abundance of salmon, often attacked the Bella Coola. Even more dreaded were the Kitkatla, the most warlike people of the central coast, who used to raid for many miles to carry off slaves whom they sold or traded for other commodities. Trespassing, too, was a source of friction which often led to hostility. In such a case, the offenders were usually held up to ridicule at potlatches, and the irritation gradually increased until wiped out in bloodshed. Members of a tribe which had suffered from a raid prompted by any of these motives would await a suitable opportunity for retaliation; this in turn would be avenged, and a vendetta often ensued lasting for generations. As already described, a ceremonial error brought punishment from a neighbouring tribe; this was the only motive which caused fighting between different Bella Coola villages. In the last century there was a struggle of this kind between the people of *Stuux* and *Ałqəlāxl* in which the former were victorious and took many slaves who were later ransomed. When ill-luck had dogged a village or a group of villages for some time, the inhabitants sometimes endeavoured to wipe out their misfortunes by attacking another tribe.

The teeming salmon at Bella Coola, Kimsquit, and *Tāl·io*, made it unnecessary for the Bella Coola to wage aggressive war for which they were unfitted both on account of their unmilitary attitude and their lack of central authority. On the other hand, they were tempting victims for more belligerent neighbours. The narrow Bella Coola valley, however, far removed from the open sea, and densely populated, was difficult to attack.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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of their omnipresence; the guiding force of public opinion is seen as a check on individual licence, fostered or inculcated by the ties which hold together ancestral families and make it impossible for a man to lead an isolated life where others will not be affected by his actions. If the white man is willing to receive new ideas, he will learn much from the comments of the Bella Coola on his own customs. Many have been to Victoria or Vancouver, and they feel that the contrasts of wealth observable in such big cities are atrocious; they ask how this is compatible with Christianity. They feel that it is unnatural for a man not to receive support from his cousins of all degrees; that the hoarding of wealth for the mere gratification of personal desires is selfish; that the selling of land is extraordinary; and that failure to ascribe every incident to supernatural causes is sacrilegious. These differences of viewpoint on so many matters explain the first impression of strangeness. A careful investigator comes to realize that he is among a people who fundamentally differ but slightly from his compatriots, though outwardly they have little in common. With respect to love, ambition, parental affection, sense of honour, pride, intelligence, even humour and vanity, the Bella Coola are essentially similar to ourselves. Unfortunately, these characteristics are expressed in ways unintelligible and often repellant to the casual traveller. If he will only look beneath the surface, he will find a people who are neither saints nor sinners, but essentially human, with the faults and follies as well as the elements of strength and wisdom which comprise, as Kipling puts it, "Men in a world of men."

The coming of the white civilization has been cataclysmic to the Bella Coola. Within two generations they have been reduced to a mere handful; instead of living in scattered villages, roaming the mountains for game and fishing at will, they now dwell in a single settlement and the taking of animals and fish is subject to law; the introduction of metal tools and mechanical appliances has revolutionized their mode of life; new foods, new clothing, new furniture has altered their living conditions; fermented drink has presented a factor unknown

3: Smith E-5 (1920-1923) 1925
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SYMPATHETIC MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT AMONG THE BELLACOOLA

By HARLAN I. SMITH

MANY OF the Bellacoola Indians today believe in sympathetic magic and witchcraft, after over a hundred years of contact with white men. Most of them live within hearing of the bells of the mission church, and the government school. Not a few of the men take logging contracts; some of them build and operate motor boats; many of them join the fishing fleets of the salmon canneries; most of the women work in the canneries; and all deal at the white men's stores.

The Bellacoola lived at the heads of the long inlets half way up the Pacific Coast of Canada and in the tributary Bella Coola valley. Now, numbering perhaps two hundred and fifty, they, with the exception of a few families, are concentrated on one reservation at the mouth of the Bella Coola river. The Bella Coola valley has been called the Norway of Canada. This was where Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the first white man to cross Canada overland, reached the sea.

Aboriginally, the Bellacoola were of the North Pacific Coast culture of America, which is characterized by the extensive use of red cedar and sea products, particularly salmon, the making of graceful, sea-going canoes, each hewn from a single cedar, the erection of large rectangular houses made of cedar planks, with carved house posts and totem poles, lack of pottery, and expertness in carpenter work, carving, and painting. This culture belongs to the barefoot area, but the Bellacoolas wore moccasins to a certain extent. The art of the area was that best known from the paintings and carvings of the totem poles, largely of conventionalized animal forms. The life centred around a very highly developed social organization, an extensive and powerful financial system, and property rights to names, rituals and honors. The Bellacoola language is one of the Salish linguistic stock. They

6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
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Since the end of the last century they 161
have dwindled down in numbers, and a few only of their once populous 361
villages are still inhabited, namely, Sâtaq, at the head of Dean Inlet; Nûtl'ɛ'l, at the mouth of Salmon River; Nuqa'lkɪn (which embraces five villages, at the mouth of Bella Coola River; Stû'ɪn, twenty-eight miles up Bella Coola River; and Tâ'lio, at the head of South Bentinck Arm. The [197]
dialect of Nûtl'ɛ'l and Sâtaq differs slightly from that of the other villages. The following is a list of their ancient villages, most of which 103
are still inhabited at certain seasons, although not regularly:— 361

1. Sâtaq.
2. Nûtl'ɛ'l. The tribe of this place is called Sôtalɛmɪn.
3. Nuqa'lkɪn, embracing the villages K·ômkô'tza and Stakê'etl on the north side, Pê'ɪstla and Nutnê'intakônê on the south side of the river.
4. Sɛnqtl.
5. Tsômô'otl.
6. Snû't'alê.
7. Nû'knita.
8. Asɛ'nanê.
9. Nuk·â'aqmats.
10. Tsqosqk·â'nê.
11. Nû'sk·'ɛlst.
12. Nûtltlê'iq.
13. Stû'ɪn, twenty-eight miles from the sea.
14. Snû'tl'ɛlatl. Nos. 4 to 14 are situated along Bella Coola River, and are given as they are met with in ascending the river.
15. Slâ'aqtl, at the confluence of Bella Coola and Driver (?) Rivers.
16. Tâ'lio, at the head of South Bentinck Arm, embracing K·'oa'pq, Tâ'lio, Nû'ik', A'sêq.
17. K·oâ'tlna, at the bay of that name in the southern entrance of Bentinck Arm. On the north entrance of Bentinck Arm were the [101]
Kiltê'itl, but it is doubtful whether they belonged to the Bilqula or to the Hê'iltsuk. The latter call the people of Dean Inlet Kî'mkuitq.

Each of these tribes is subdivided into gentes, which appear to be 614
arranged in exogamic groups. I learnt the names of the following gentes, which bear the names of their ancestors:—

Gentes of the Nuqa'lkmɪn:

1. Tok·oâ'ɪs (=looking down on his *family*).
2. Spaqpaqô'lgmq; Qê'mtaɪos name: Mâ'lakyilatl (see p. 415)
3. Siatlqêlâ'aq.
4. Kɛ'ltâqk·aua.
5. Pô'tlas.

Gentes of the Nuak·'ɛ'lstɛmɪn:

1. Tî'ak·anmô'ot.
2. K·ôoqôtlâ'nê.
3. ?

Gentes of the Tâlio'mɪn:

1. Ialo'stɛmôt (=making good fire); Qê'mtaɪos name; T'â't'ɛntakit (=a cave protecting from rain).
2. Spatsâ'tlî.
3. Tsmqoâ'akyas.
4. Ha'mtsît.